

harbour intermediate stages of parasites that may be harmful to man.

Reptiles: The tail and legs of Goannas (*Varanus gouldii*) may be stewed, grilled or clay-baked. Smaller lizards may be stewed. Snakes may be treated the same as the Goanna, after removal of the head. Do not remove the skin of reptiles when clay-baking.

Fresh-water Animals

The hind legs of frogs (e.g., *Hyla aurea*) may be grilled.

Fish, such as Cobbler, Atherines, Minnows, etc., may be stewed, fried or clay-baked. The head of the cobbler should be removed. Lampreys may be parboiled and fried in their own fat or grilled.

Jilgies, Koonacs, Marron (*Cheraps spp.*) and fresh-water Shrimps (*Palaemonetes australis*) are boiled with salt in the usual manner of crustaceans. They may also be eaten raw.

Fresh-water mussels (*Westralunio ambiguum*) may be eaten raw or boiled, similarly to oysters. Care should be taken to remove the byssus.

Insect Foods

Bardies, the larvae of longicorn beetles (Family Cerambycidae) are prevalent in blackboys and are edible raw or grilled. Any larvae that show blue or black through the skin, such as those of cockchafer beetles (Family Scarabaeidae) or are hairy, should be discarded unless the internal organs are removed.

The eggs and larvae of ants are edible raw but have a curious taste.

Both native and introduced bees produce honey.

Some big wood moths can be eaten after the fur is singed off. Especially tasty are the gravid females.

THOMSON'S MULGA SNAKE

By L. GLAUERT, W.A. Museum, Perth

In 1933 Dr. Donald F. Thomson described the head of a large brown snake which had been killed at the East Alligator River, Arnhemland by Mr. P. Cahill, in 1914. It differed in certain features from the true Mulga Snake, *Pseudechis australis*, and therefore received the name of *Pseudechis platycephalus* (*Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond.*, 1933, pt. 4).

Dr. Thomson's specimen had aberrant features and as the head of a similar snake, eight feet long, killed on the Adelaide River flat by Lieutenant Commander L. C. Horsburgh has reached the Museum (reg. no. R9986) it is felt that a description will direct attention to the possible existence of this large deadly reptile in our far north as well as add to the original description.

Description: A large brown snake attaining a length of eleven feet, highly venomous and very aggressive. Head broad and flat tapering rapidly to the tip of the snout, slightly distinct from the neck, 36 mm. wide; canthus rostralis distinct; diameter of eye 6

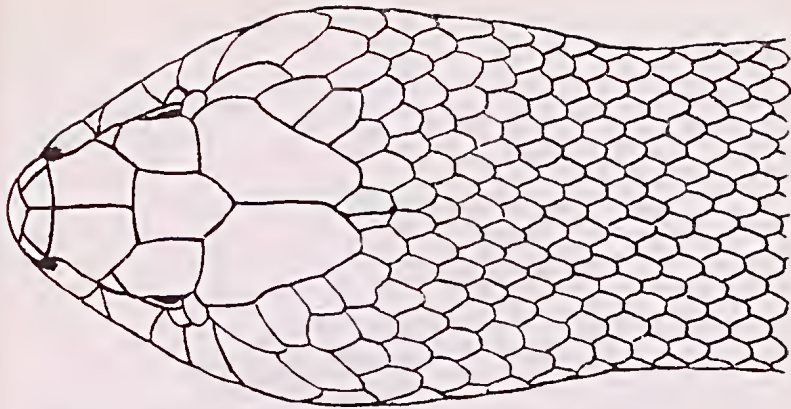


Fig. 1.—Thomson's Mulga Snake, *Pseudechis platycephalus*.
—Olive Seymour, del.

mm.) slightly less than its distance from the mouth (7 mm.); rostral wider than high, its width (11 mm.) more than once and one half the height (6.5 mm.); internasals (5.8 mm.) more than half the length of the prefrontals (9.9 mm.), which are shorter than the frontal (11 mm.); frontal once and one half times as long as wide (6.8 mm.), as long as its distance from the rostral, slightly wider than the supraoculars (6 mm.), shorter than the parietals (17 mm.), which are slightly shorter than their distance from the rostral (18.5 mm.). Nasal divided, in contact with the single preocular; two postoculars; temporals 2 + 2, the lower anterior very large, wedged between the fifth and sixth upper labials; six upper labials, third and fourth entering the eye, fifth and sixth much the largest, subequal; three of four lower labials in contact with the anterior chin shields which are as long as or slightly shorter than the posterior; six lower labials, the third and fourth much the largest. Scales on the neck increasing in size posteriorly, faintly keeled dorsally in 20-24 rows; at the fourth ventral scales in 19 rows round the body.

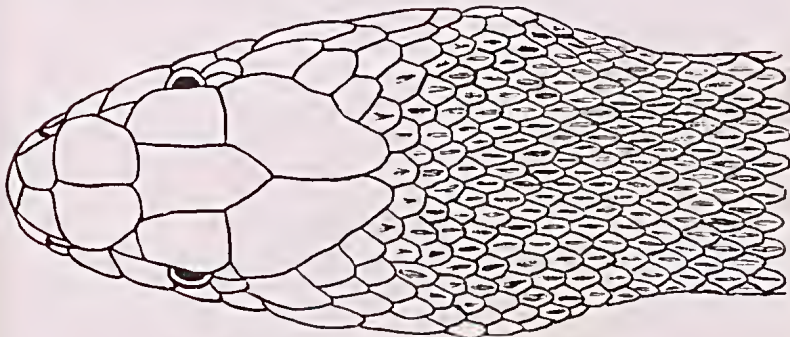


Fig. 2.—Taipan, *Oxyuranus scutellatus*.
—After Thomson.

Colour: Above uniform buffy brown, laterally and on the upper lip nathy gray, lower lip and under surface cool creamy white.

Remarks: This snake can be distinguished from the Mulga Snake (*Pseudochis australis*) by the shape of the head, by the number of scales round the body, 19 instead of 17, these being also more lanceolate dorsally.

The Taipan (*Oxyuranus scutellatus*) which grows to a similar length has a different shaped head and 21 to 23 rows of scales round the body which bear conspicuous keels dorsally, the keels becoming less pronounced and even disappearing completely laterally.

REPORTS OF EXCURSIONS

JARRAHDALE

Ideal spring weather favoured the excursion of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club to Jarrahdale on Sunday, October 8, 1950, and two full bus-loads of members made the trip.

Jarrahdale is a timber milling township, 4-5 miles within the Darling searp and 30 miles south of Perth. Though it was established in 1870 and the timber in its environs has been cut-over the habitat has been otherwise little impaired. During the excursion we examined the valley of the Gooralong Brook, south-east of the settlement, and here there were only two small holdings. The area was typical Darling Range laterite country, mainly of jarrah forest (*Eucalyptus marginata*) with some marri (*E. calophylla*). The Gooralong Brook, a tributary of the Serpentine River, is a small perennial stream flowing in a shallow mature valley, its banks being thickly fringed with thick vegetation. About two miles from Jarrahdale it expanded into a swampy area, grown with paperbark (*Melaleuca parviflora*) and flooded gum (*E. rudis*).

Plants did not come under special study. Members noticed from the bus, however, that *Leschenaultia biloba* was plentiful and in flower alongside the main Bunbury road, but it was sparse or absent in the adjoining fenced paddocks where grazing was carried on. This was a reminder that one of the most potent factors in the diminution of some species of native flora is the grazing of stock. In the Jarrahdale area the following were some of the orchid species in flower: *Caladenia Patersonii*, var. *longicauda*, *Caladenia flava*, *Pterostylis recurva*, *Pterostylis nana* and *Eriochilus scaber*—the latter two identified by Mrs. R. Eriekson. A prominent exotie on the cleared ground near the township was the French Lavender (*Lavandula stoechas*).

Dr. J. Gentilli reported that because of the lateness of the season the fungi collected mostly belonged to durable species. *Lentinus fasciatus* and *Polyporus australiensis* were found on dead timber, and an old *Fomes* sp. was collected from a tree. Two specimens of *Lentinus* collected in the swampy areas where a minor creek originated were fresh and moist. All the remaining specimens were dry. Some good fresh specimens of *Panacolus*,